

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Health Plan for Hamilton County, Tennessee is a presentation of important health and health-related issues that together paint a picture of the health status of residents of Hamilton County. The plan includes historical information that summarizes what has occurred in Hamilton County since 1994 with respect to health assessment and planning, and the development of strategies to address health priorities. In these regards, the contributions of the Metropolitan Council for Community Services and the Greater Chattanooga Community Health Task Force are referenced.

The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Health Council has assumed responsibility for the more recent efforts at coordinating and expanding an on-going *community diagnosis process*. A report on this process is presented in "The Community Health Plan for Hamilton County, Tennessee," (a community diagnosis document).

The community assessment process detailed in the community diagnosis document centers on a review and analysis of the following health indicators which have been determined to be important in gauging the health status of persons residing in Hamilton County: risky behaviors and other behavioral practices as reported by residents, morbidity data, and mortality data.

The findings that emerged from the research point to the revelation that *many of the causes of illness, disability, and premature death for Hamilton County residents are determined by behavior and the personal choices that the people make.*

Five health priorities are presented in the document that were determined to be most important by the community and the Regional Health Council's Community Health Planning Committee. They are: (1).^{*} Obesity, Diet and Exercise, (2).^{*} Tobacco Use, (3). Risky Sexual Behavior, (4). Alcohol and Drug Use, and (5). Lack of Involvement in Health Screenings and other Preventive Measures. (*Number 1 and 2 are tied for the number one priority ranking.) The report references subcommittees that have been established to develop strategies for addressing each priority area.

Very important to the planning process has been the establishment of a *Health Futures Committee* which is assigned the task of crafting a vision of where Hamilton County could be in the next five to ten years with respect to the health of its residents as the new millenium unfolds. The on-going community diagnosis and planning processes referenced in the report as well as any subsequent strategies and interventions will be integrated with the long-range goals developed by the *Health Futures Committee*.

In conclusion, the Community Health Plan document reports on an unending process which assists local residents in knowing and understanding their health status, in determining what they want and can realistically achieve, and in developing and mobilizing an action plan based on analysis and planning.

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Regional Health Council